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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT COMMUNICATION STYLE AND ADOLESCENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

BY

COLLEEN J. MACDOUGALL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND

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FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF HOME ECONOMICS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1986

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT COMMUNICATION STYLE AND ADOLESCENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOR submitted by Colleen J. MacDougall in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Family Life Education.

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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the relationship between parent communication style and adolescent sexual behavior. Using an adaptation of Hawkins' Communication Inventory, Olson's Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory, and a compilation of questions on sexual behavior, the above relationship was examined in reference to how each of four parent communication styles -- conventional, controlling, speculative, and contactful -- were related to the adolescent having or not having had sexual intercourse. The sample consisted of 69 adolescents, aged 15-19, and 28 parents. Results indicated that adolescents who perceived their mothers as being more open were less likely to have had sexual intercourse. Likewise, if the mother was perceived as being willing to disclose, the adolescent was less likely to have had intercourse. This same relationship for the father was not found. Another finding of the study was that parents were reported to be less open in discussing sexual behavior than in discussing general matters.

If, as suggested, openness and disclosure in parental communication are related to fewer adolescents having had sexual intercourse, and if these skills are

then considered important in attempting to reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancy, family life educators will need to devise programs which will assist parents in developing the skills. In particular, added attention needs to be given to helping fathers acquire and/or practice the skills.

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To my parents, I dedicate this thesis and give them my most heartfelt thanks for their moral and financial support, which was so willingly given.

To my very special friend, thank you for believing in me and for helping me to become what I have.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Despite contraceptive interventions, large numbers of teenagers continue to become pregnant and to enter parenthood prior to leaving adolescence. Recent patterns of sexual activity among teenagers have helped maintain this high level of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing (Zelnik & Kantner, 1980; Herold, 1984). "More teenagers are sexually active, more are active with a greater number of partners and with increasing coital frequency, and more teenagers are initiating their sexual activity at increasingly younger ages" (Fox, 1979, p.21). That teenagers continue to be sexually active has been indicated in a study (Meikle, Pearce, Peichinis, & Pysh, 1981) done in Saskatchewan in 1980, which reported that 45% of the 15 to 19 year olds interviewed had already experienced sexual intercourse, with 15 being the average age of onset of this activity for that same group. It has been found (Scales & Everly, 1977) that 90% of those teens who are sexually active may not be using contraceptives regularly, or when they do, they do not use an effective method. For instance, withdrawal was reported to be the second most common method used.

Today the rate of illegitimate births among Canadian teenagers has begun to stabilize. Between 1975 and 1981, there was a .6% decrease in the number of teens who became pregnant (Statistics Canada Reports, 1975-1981). However, as indicated above, and as supported by other studies (Crepault & Gemme, 1975; Frappier, 1981; Weston, 1980), this rate remains alarmingly high. The prevailing high incidence of sexual activity, coupled with the absence or ineffective use of contraceptives, have perpetuated a high level of concern among parents, practitioners, and educators. This concern arises from the still high risk of adolescent pregnancy, and the resulting, adverse consequences to infant, mother, father, grandparents, and society at large (Bolton, 1980; Chilman, 1980).

To focus only on the sexual behavior of adolescents is not to suggest that other aspects of adolescent sexuality, their feelings or attitudes towards being male or female, are not important. Rather, in light of the still high rate of adolescent pregnancy and of the need to reduce that rate, researchers must focus on that aspect of sexual behavior which can result in pregnancy. That behavior is sexual intercourse and the ineffective use of

contraception. In addition, one must model studies to obtain information which will help determine the most effective way to decrease this risk of adolescent pregnancy. In doing this, researchers have often focused on the "sources, quality and effectiveness of the sexual preparation adolescents are receiving from significant others" (Fox, 1980, p.347).

Like these studies, the present study is concerned with the source of this preparation; in particular, the focus is on parents. In evaluating the quality and effectiveness of parents as a source, the process of communication through which parents transmit feelings, attitudes, facts, beliefs and ideas about sexuality, has become a point of study. Researchers (Thomson & Spanier, 1978; Newcomer & Urdy, 1984) have identified the need to determine if particular aspects or styles of communication can be associated with specified adolescent sexual and/or contraceptive behaviors. Such information could then instigate further research which could provide more direction to family life educators in planning programs aimed at helping parents adopt or strengthen communication styles most conducive to decreasing the risk of adolescent pregnancy. The question of this study, then, is what relationship exists between parent communication style and

adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior? The four main communication styles to be addressed are the conventional, controlling, speculative, and contactful (Hawkins, Weisberg & Ray, 1980). However, because of the nature of the responses on the questionnaires, five additional styles will be discussed. Four of these additional styles are comprised of an equal number of responses from each of two original communication styles. These four additional styles are conventional-controlling, controlling-speculative, speculative-contactful, and controlling-contactful. A fifth additional style includes one response from each of the four original styles. With the four main styles, and these five additional ones, there will be nine communication styles discussed in the results.

The focus on adolescence is significant in that it is often viewed as a particularly turbulent period (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, & Wilson, 1982; Dacey, 1981) in which the adolescent experiences many physical and psychological changes with which he/she must cope. One of these physical changes is an increased awareness of sexual urges. The expression of these urges involves many feelings and emotions which in themselves may be undergoing change. This whole process of coping with these changes is often

complicated by the fact that the adolescent, at the same time, is trying to establish his/her sense of identity (Dacey, 1982), and to deal with pressures and standards imposed on him/her by peers, and by society at large. Parents will need to be sensitive to these changes and keep the lines of communication open so that the adolescent may feel able to discuss the changes and their implications. Likewise, adolescents will need to be aware of changes they may need to instigate in their communication with their parents if this openness is to be maintained.

It is necessary also to note the particular stage of adolescence from which the sample was drawn. That stage is middle-late adolescence, with particular focus on 15-19 year olds. This age group was chosen because, as mentioned earlier, 15 was found to be the average age of onset of sexual intercourse (Mitchell, 1979; Herold, 1984). Therefore, choosing 15 as the youngest age from which the sample was to be drawn would ensure some variability in the sexual behavior of that sample. That is, it could be expected that there would be some adolescents who had had intercourse, and some who had not. Thus, it would be possible to obtain an adequate number of participants in each of the following three categories: those who have not had sexual intercourse,

those who have had sexual intercourse but are not using contraception, and those who have had sexual intercourse and are using contraception.

A final point of justification for this study was the inadequacy of present research on the influence of parents on the sexual behavior of their adolescents. Although the majority of studies on the topic (Darling & Hicks, 1982; Reiss, 1967; Emmerick, 1978; Thomson, 1982) have recognized that "parents do influence adolescent sexual behavior", many have stated it as a vague theoretical concept, having used no criteria by which to make that statement. Others (Fox, 1979, 1980; Sorenson, 1973; Jessor & Jessor, 1975; Kantner & Zelnik, 1972) have tried to determine "how" parents influence adolescent sexual behavior and have focused on parent communication as one mediating factor. However, even this research usually is limited to such variables as amount of communication, topics discussed, or an overall evaluation of the communication as "good" or "bad". Little indication has been given as to what styles or aspects of parental communication may be linked to certain sexual/contraceptive behaviors in adolescents. Furthermore, the majority of studies on adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior have focused only on females (Zelnik & Kantner, 1980; Furstenberg,

1976). Few studies (Sorenson, 1973; Yankelovich, 1974; Vener & Stewart, 1974) have identified possible differences in the sexual/contraceptive behavior of males and females, or the different influences parents may have on each.

In view of the aforementioned discussion, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between parent communication style, as perceived by both the parent and by the adolescent, and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. To summarize, the importance of the study is based on five main points as outlined in this section: (a) adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior is a prevalent problem; (b) although the illegitimate birth rate has stabilized in Canada, it is nevertheless at a high level. This high rate of adolescent sexual activity coupled with their non-use or ineffective use of contraceptives increases the risk of pregnancy; (c) adolescent pregnancy has many adverse consequences for all involved; (d) sexuality researchers need to conduct more qualitative research in parent-adolescent communication; and (e) this qualitative research is needed to give direction to family educators in planning parent-education programs. These concerns led to the objectives of this study, which were to

determine if there is a relationship between parent communication style and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior, as perceived by the adolescent, and, more specifically, to identify the nature of that relationship as it pertains to each of the four communication styles developed by Hawkins et al.(1980).

# CHAPTER II

## FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study is concerned with the circular, reciprocal relationship that exists between one subsystem (parents) and another subsystem (adolescents), and all within a larger system (family). As such, a system's framework (Burr, Hill, Nye, & Riess, 1979) is most appropriate to use. More specifically, and as indicated in Figure 1, this study will examine the relationship that exists between parent communication style and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. Parent communication style is the initial input, or "stimulus from the environment entering the system" (Broderick & Smith, 1979, p.114) which will be discussed in relation to the response it emits in the adolescents' sexual and contraceptive behavior (initial output) (Broderick & Smith, 1979).

Figure 1. Systemic interaction of parent communication style and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior.

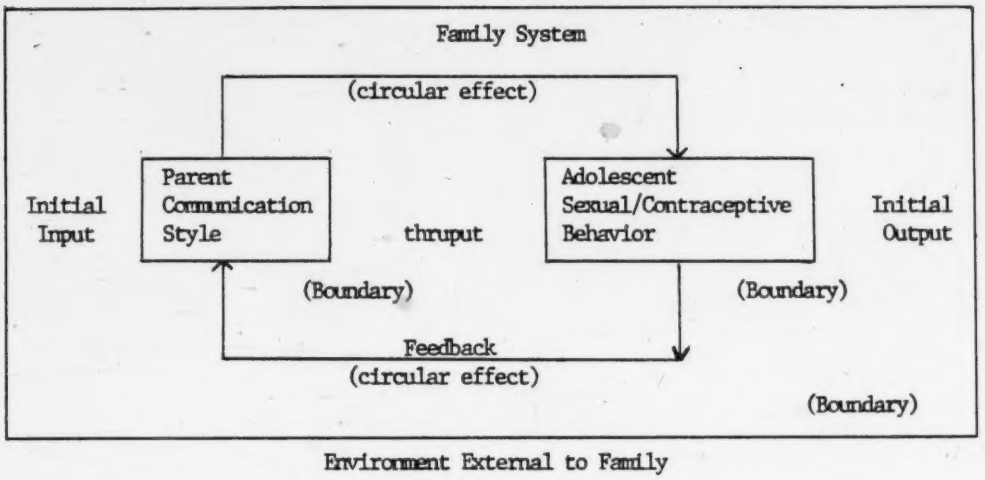


Figure adapted from Kantor and Lehr (1975)

To create a clearer understanding of this operation, some definitions are needed. A system has been defined as "a set of components together with the relationship between the components and their attributes" (Broderick & Smith, 1979, p.112). One condition which must be met in order for these components to function as a system is that they must be directly or indirectly related in a reciprocal, circular pattern of effect (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Montgomery, 1982). The reciprocity means that the components interact in a manner such that a change in one part, for example in the parent communication style, will effect a change in the other part, or the adolescent's sexual/contraceptive

behavior. In being open, parents may influence the adolescent in deciding which sexual behavior he/she will engage in. The reciprocal effect becomes circular (see Figure 1) when the output, the adolescent's sexual/contraceptive behavior re-enters the system to affect future communicative patterns between that adolescent and his/her parents. A sexually active adolescent may influence the parent to be either more or less open. The degree of openness exercised by the parent may or may not influence subsequent sexual/contraceptive behavior in that adolescent. This reciprocal, interdependent effect indicates that any behavior is not isolated in itself. Rather, it must be studied within the context of its environment. For the adolescent, that environment may consist of individuals such as parents and friends, and also of the tasks of his/her developmental stage with which he/she must cope. Those tasks could include coping with peer pressure, or even his/her own physical development. Adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior then must not be viewed just as a result of individual personality and experience, but instead as a result of the communicative interaction between the parent, the adolescent, and the environment.

Further understanding of the system's theory and its applicability to the problem being studied requires discussion of the concept of "boundaries". The organization of the components creates the system's boundary, or that which separates or identifies those components belonging to one system as compared to those belonging to its larger environment. Each component, being a subsystem of a larger system, but also a system in itself, will have its own boundaries. For example, parents of one adolescent will have their own values and standards which will influence and differentiate their communication style from that of other parents. The adolescent will also have his/her individual values and communication style. Parents and adolescents will also have conceptions of what they can expect from each other, of what each other's boundaries are. Parents will be aware of how much of their influence adolescents will accept, just as the adolescent will have expectations regarding how to approach his/her parents in particular situations. As such, the boundaries each perceives or expects the other as having, or as having the right to have, become important in determining the type of communicative patterns that those individuals will practice.

A concept often discussed in relation to boundaries is the extent to which they are open or closed (see Figure 1). Families become selective in what they incorporate from their environment, and based on the degree of that selectivity, or the extent to which they are willing to interact with their environment, can be classified as relatively open or relatively closed to that environment (Kantor & Lehr, 1975). The more open the boundaries, the more willing the family to allow input from the environment. The more open parents are to viewpoints on sexuality which may differ from their own, the more willing those parents will be in allowing the adolescent to interact with those expressing those differing viewpoints. A high level of closedness would mean that this same input into the family system would be discouraged. It is important to note here that no family can be completely open or closed if it is to maintain itself. Existing on a continuum, one is only "more closed than others" (Montgomery, 1982, p.6).

This degree of openness and closedness is determined not only by the individual or family system's willingness to incorporate various influences from the environment but also by their ability to effect change in response to demands presented by that

environment. In viewing adolescent sexual behavior as a possible threat to the stability of the family system, parents may respond by either keeping threatening influences out of the family, and continuing in pre-established patterns of response or they may be more open to influences from the environment, and use them as opportunities for growth and re-evaluation of the system. Each family and individual will make these decisions favoring sameness or change in relation to the values and standards which they have. These values and standards are part of the "rules of transformation" (Burr, Hill, Nye, & Reiss, 1979) which individuals or families apply in responding to inputs as they pass through the system on their way to becoming outputs (see Figure 1). It is the application of these rules which will determine whether the family will resist changes in their communicative patterns which may be necessary in coping with the demands of adolescent sexuality, or whether they will incorporate those changes to meet those demands. In reference to Hawkins, Weisberg, and Ray's (1980) definitions of the four communication styles under study, parents may refuse to talk about sexual matters at all, keeping communication between them and their adolescent closed (conventional and controlling

styles), or they may be more open, and actually invite discussion on such issues (speculative and contactful styles).

In summary, in studying the relationship between parent communication style and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior, a system's framework of reference has been shown to be appropriate. Using this perspective, parent communication style and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior are seen as related in such a manner so that one interdependently affects the other. Thus neither can be studied as an entity in itself, but rather as an interactive component of that family system. The nature of that interaction will be determined first by the degree to which individual and family systems are open to input from their environment, and second, by the degree to which they will incorporate any change from that environment into their system, for the maintenance of that system.

# CHAPTER III

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Hawkins, Weisberg, and Ray (1980) have classified communication into four main styles based on the degree of openness and disclosure expressed both on the part of the sender and of the receiver. According to his definition, communication is open when: (a) verbalization is encouraged; (b) when there is an interest in and respect for alternate viewpoints; and (c) when there is a willingness to explore those alternate viewpoints. Communication is closed when: (a) that verbalization is inhibited; (b) when alternate viewpoints are minimized or ignored; and (c) when there is a refusal to explore those viewpoints. Disclosure is defined by the degree to which one exposes one's own thoughts and feelings to others. High disclosure is characterized by a strong commitment to expression of thoughts and feelings, low disclosure by an unwillingness or inability to express the same.

With these definitions in mind, Hawkins, Weisberg and Ray's (1980) four communication styles can be identified as:

1. Controlling, where communication is closed. Disclosure is high; however, it is accomplished mainly by means of extra-verbal cues, leaving meanings implicit.

2. Conventional, where communication is also closed, but disclosure is low. Issues are avoided or glossed over; i.e., cocktail party banter.

3. Speculative, exhibiting an openness to exploring issues, yet a reluctance to disclose one's own feelings about them. Thus, this style is characterized by open communication, but low disclosure.

4. Contactful, which is also open, but is high in disclosure.

Focusing, then, on these two factors, openness and disclosure, the literature will be reviewed with reference to the relationship of each to the sexual and contraceptive behavior of adolescents. The first section will refer to studies which have made only general reference to the closedness/openness in parent communication as it relates to adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. A second section will focus on the relationship of adolescent disclosure to adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior. Finally, in the conclusion, these two concepts will be related back to the four communication styles. Then the weaknesses of the literature, its indications, and the problem under study will lead to the hypotheses/questions to be tested in this study. In this review, sexual and contraceptive behavior will be discussed together because most studies have reported them together.

**Closed/Open Communication**

Many studies (Chilman, 1980; Shirreff & Dezelsky, 1979) point to the fact that a poor relationship with parents is linked to greater incidence of sexual intercourse in adolescents. Jessor and Jessor (1975), and Schinke and Gilchrist (1978) have more specifically defined this poor relationship as poor communication. Other studies (Thompson & Spanier, 1978) have tried to analyze or explain why this poor communication may exist. In reference to the previous definition of closed communication, it could be argued that these researchers have in fact equated this poor communication with closed communication, but because they have not defined "poor", no clear relationship has been identified between closed parent communication and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. Therefore, in reviewing such studies, the above relationship must be inferred.

Some researchers (Dobson, 1982; Chilman, 1980; Jorgensen & Alexander, 1983) have focused on the lack of communication between parents and adolescents, and have drawn conclusions regarding its effect on the sexual and contraceptive behavior of adolescents. Dobson (1982) has stated that permissive parents encourage their adolescents to be sexually active by

the very fact that they fail to communicate acceptable standards of sexual behavior to them. However, he has not tested this assumption. Jorgensen and Alexander (1983) support Dobson's assumption in that they found that lack of effective parent communication was related not only to an increased incidence of pregnancy in adolescents, but also to a low rate of contraceptive use (12%). Chilman (1980) also found that lack of communication with parents regarding contraceptives was associated with non-use of those contraceptives in adolescent girls.

Other studies (Fox, 1979, 1980) have attempted to explain why this poor or closed communication occurs, by attributing it to other more specific factors. In Fox's (1979) study, adolescent girls who lacked closeness with their parents and had received sex education from someone other than those parents, reported that they were more willing to have sex than were their counterparts who had received this information from their parents. Fox concluded from that study that the degree of connectedness adolescents feel with their parents will distinguish between those who will remain virgins and those who will not. In a later study (1980), Fox identified a lack of emotional bonding, as is "perpetuated in relationships where

feelings and beliefs cannot be openly expressed" (p.278), as being associated with a high incidence of adolescent sexual activity.

Regarding open communication, results from several studies indicate its association with sexual/contraceptive behavior in adolescents. Again, however, this association must be inferred because the studies have not clearly used the term "open communication" as such, but rather have focused on some of its characteristics (e.g., encouragement of verbalization). Fox (1980) found that daughters whose mothers talked to them about sex and contraception were more often regular and effective contraceptive users. This is supported by Miller and Simon's (1974) study which reported not only more effective contraceptive use in adolescents whose parents had talked to them about sex, but also a postponement of sexual activity. In a more general sense, Darling and Hicks (1982) have argued that by merely being "open about sex" (p.237), parents could deter sexual activity in adolescents. However, they did not test this hypotheses; neither did they define the term "open". In another study (Darling & Hicks, 1978), they did report that a greater amount of affection expressed by the parent in communication with the adolescent was correlated with a lower incidence of sexual activity in those adolescents.

In summary, the literature has indicated a relationship between closedness/openness in parent communication and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior in adolescents. Closed communication, as exemplified in total lack of communication, and lack of closeness or emotional bonding, has been linked to a high incidence of sexual intercourse in adolescents, and to their irregular and ineffective use of contraceptives. Openness in parent-adolescent communication, indicated by encouraged verbalization and expression of affection, has been argued to be associated with delayed sexual intercourse in adolescents, and with more regular and effective contraceptive use. It is noted that most studies quoted either focused only on female adolescents (Chilman, 1980; Fox, 1979, 1980; Miller & Simon, 1974), or made no distinction (Jessor & Jessor, 1975; Dobson, 1982; Jorgensen & Alexander, 1983; Darling & Hicks, 1982) between the sexual/contraceptive behavior of males and females or on possible differences in the relation of parent communication style to each.

**Disclosure in Communication**

Although parent disclosure is also not a concept clearly discussed in the literature, several studies have nevertheless indirectly indicated its association

with adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. Jorgensen, King, and Torrey (1980) found that female non-virgins were less likely to confide in their parents. In Clayton and Bokemeier's (1980) study, female adolescents who had already experienced sexual intercourse reported that they were less likely to spend time discussing sexual matters with their parents. In addition, this latter study indicated that not only had these girls already had sexual intercourse, but that 86% of them were not using contraceptives regularly.

Other studies reinforce these findings. Kelly (1974) found that it was the degree to which adolescent girls felt able to share decisions with parents that was related to their postponing their sexual activity. Similarly, having input into family discussions about sexuality was found (Reiss, Banwart, & Foreman, 1975) to be related to the likelihood that contraceptive counselling would be sought, either from parents or from clinics.

On the basis of the above studies, it would appear that low disclosure, on the part of the adolescent, is related to a higher incidence of sexual activity, and to irregular use of contraceptives. High disclosure, on the other hand, is related to postponement of that

activity and to the likelihood that contraceptive counselling will be sought. It is noted here that reference is only made to how adolescent disclosure is related to adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior; no mention is given to how parental disclosure may be related to that same behavior. Then, as before, no distinction is made regarding the sexual/contraceptive behavior of males. The studies either focus on female adolescents (Jorgensen, King, & Torrey; Clayton & Bokemeier, 1980; Kelly, 1974) or on adolescents in general (Reiss, Banwart, & Foreman, 1975).

**Conclusion**

This literature review has focused on the relationship between openness and disclosure in parent communication and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. The four communication styles (Hawkins, Weisberg, & Ray, 1980) originally discussed in this review are based on those two concepts. To draw this review together, it is necessary to relate those concepts back to the four styles. Based on the relationships indicated to exist between openness and disclosure and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior, it is possible to predict how each of the four styles may be related to that same behavior. The conventional and contactful styles operate at the two

extremes of openness and disclosure. Conventional communication is the most closed and it is also low in disclosure (Hawkins, Weisberg, & Ray, 1980). Because these two characteristics have both been shown to be related to increased incidence of sexual activity and more irregular and ineffective use of contraceptives in adolescents, it could be predicted that adolescents in families exhibiting a conventional style of communication will behave in like manner. That is, they will be more sexually active, and less likely to be effective and regular contraceptive users. Contactful communication exists at the other extreme, exhibiting the most open communication and high disclosure (Hawkins, Weisberg, & Ray, 1980). Again, these two characteristics have been shown to be similarly related to adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. Both are associated with a postponement of sexual activity and more effective contraceptive use. From this, it can be predicted that adolescents in families exhibiting a contactful style of communication will behave in a similar manner. That is, they will be more apt to postpone sexual activity and to use contraceptives effectively.

Controlling and speculative styles exhibit characteristics which have been shown to have opposing relationships to adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. For example, the controlling style is closed but high in disclosure (Hawkins, Weisberg, & Ray, 1980), the two having been shown to have opposing relationships to the adolescents' sexual behavior. Likewise, the speculative style, being open but low in disclosure (Hawkins, Weisberg, & Ray, 1980) exhibits those same opposing variables. Therefore, on the basis of this literature review, it cannot be clearly predicted how these two latter styles, the controlling and the speculative, will be related to adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. It can only be said that they will in all likelihood operate between the two extremes and be different from those extremes. It is not yet known whether these controlling and speculative styles will be related differently from each other to adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior.

This review of literature has also identified three major weaknesses in research on adolescent sexual behavior. First, the relationships between openness/closedness and disclosure to adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior were not clearly indicated. Rather, they had to be inferred from more general

findings. Second, reference was made only to the relationship between adolescent disclosure and adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior. No indication was given as to how parental disclosure may be related to that behavior. Viewing parent-adolescent communication from a system's perspective, one could expect it to have the same effect as adolescent disclosure. Yet, to this point, that relationship can only be speculated. Finally, there was no distinction made between male and female sexual/contraceptive behavior, or no differences indicated in how parent communication style may be related to each. There may indeed be a difference in how parent communication relates to the sexual/contraceptive behavior of males versus females, and, not having identified those differences, present studies may be incomplete. Data (Sorensen, 1973) has shown that males become sexually active at a younger age and that they may be less frequent users of contraceptives than females (Herold, 1984). It can be further argued that this behavior, for males, will be independent of parent communication style. In contrast, the sexual/contraceptive behavior of females may be related to that communication style. One reason for this, in recognition of the still existing double standard, is that boys have been

socialized to believe that it is acceptable for single males to be sexually active, but not for single females. This was indicated in Shapiro's (1980) study where 60% of the mothers and 70% of the fathers wanted to communicate to their sons that premarital sex was acceptable, compared to 30% of mothers and less than 40% of fathers wanting to convey that same message to their daughters.

The state of the present literature, its indications, and the question under study, that of the relationship between parent communication and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior, all led to the formulation of the hypotheses/questions tested. These hypotheses/questions focus on the concepts of openness and disclosure, but conclusions are referred to and drawn from the four communication styles. The hypotheses, in null form, are:

1. There will be no relationship between mother's communication style, as perceived by the adolescent, and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior.
2. There will be no relationship between father's communication style, as perceived by the adolescent, and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior.
3. There will be no relationship between gender of parent, gender of adolescent, and communication style.

4. There will be no difference between the mother's and adolescent's perception of mother's communication style as determined by Hawkins' measure of communication style.

5. There will be no difference between the father's and adolescent's perception of father's communication style as determined by Hawkins' measure of communication style.

6. There will be no difference between family openness in general communication and family openness in communication about sexual behavior, as perceived by the adolescent.

One question to be tested is:

1. What is the relationship between gender of adolescent, adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior, and parental openness, as perceived by the adolescent, in parent-adolescent communication about sexual behavior?

In addition, one post hoc analysis was done.

1. There will be no difference in the adolescent's perception of parental communication style for subjects whose parents participated and those whose parents did not participate.

# CHAPTER IV

# METHOD

## Sample

The sample of 69 adolescents consisted of 18 males and 51 females from the ages of 15-19 years, with a mean age of 18 years (see Tables 1-6 for further description of adolescent sample).

Table 1

Source of Sample

| Source | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Local high school | 29 | 42 |
| General community | 20 | 29 |
| University classes | 8 | 11.5 |
| School for unwed mothers | 8 | 11.5 |
| Church groups | 4 | 6 |
| [a]Total | 69 | 100 |

[a]The total number of adolescents answering that question.

Table 2

Living Status of Adolescent Sample

| Living Status | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| With parents and/or sibs | 37 | 58 |
| With roommate/friend | 17 | 26 |
| With girl/boy friend | 3 | 5 |
| With spouse and/or children | 4 | 6 |
| Alone | 3 | 5 |
| [a]Total | 64 | 100 |

Table 3

Family Structure of Adolescent Sample

| Family Structure | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Two-parent with/without sibs | 52 | 81 |
| One-parent | 6 | 9 |
| Blended family | 5 | 8 |
| With other relatives | 1 | 2 |
| [a]Total | 64 | 100 |

Table 4

Religion of Adolescent

| Religion | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Protestant | 30 | 47 |
| Roman Catholic | 19 | 30 |
| Eastern Non-Christian | 1 | 2 |
| Other | 2 | 3 |
| None | 12 | 18 |
| [a]Total | 64 | 100 |

Table 5

Adolescent Religiousity

| [b]Religiousity | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Very important | 10 | 16 |
| Fairly important | 22 | 34 |
| Fairly unimportant | 13 | 20 |
| Not important at all | 19 | 30 |
| [a]Total | 64 | 100 |
| Frequency of attending a church or church event (average per year) | 16.91 times per year | |

[b]Religiousity was defined in two ways; first, by perceived importance of religion, and second, by frequency of attending a church event.

Table 6

[c]First Ethnicity of Adolescent

| Ethnicity | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| European | 32 | 54 |
| Canadian | 9 | 15 |
| Asian | 3 | 5 |
| British | 11 | 19 |
| None | 4 | 7 |
| [a]Total | 59 | 100 |

[c]Some adolescents identified with four ethnic origins. Only their first choice is listed here.

Thirty-one of these adolescents gave permission to let the researcher contact their parents. Fifty-four parents were contacted, including 30 mothers and 24 fathers. Of those, 16 mothers and 12 fathers responded, for a total parent sample of 28. All 28 were the natural parents of the adolescents. Family structure was not controlled.

All participants were volunteers, who were contacted through the leaders of various organizations; namely, church groups, a school for unwed mothers, and through instructors of several university and high school classes in the city of Edmonton. Questionnaires were either mailed or given out through other individuals or group leaders. All that were returned were mailed back. The return rate was 58%.

Difficulty was experienced in obtaining this sample because of the sensitive, personal nature of

some of the questions on sexual/contraceptive behavior. Thus, although the sample was not random, it was the best that could be obtained.

**Materials**

The adolescent questionnaire consisted of four main parts, and the parent questionnaire of three parts. Part One of each was Olson's (1982) inventory on communication. Part Two of each was an adaptation of Hawkins, Weisberg, and Ray's (1980) measure of communication style. Part Three of only the adolescent questionnaire focused on sexual/contraceptive behavior. In the last section, both parents and adolescents were asked for demographic information (see Appendixes 1 and 2 for a copy of these forms).

Olson's inventory. Olson's Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (1982) was used to measure general communication between the parent and adolescent. The purpose of the inventory is to assess the views of adolescents and their parents regarding their perceptions and experiences of communication with each other. Particular focus is on both the extent of openness each experiences in expressing their ideas or concerns, and on the degree to which problems are perceived in this communication. The questions

measuring both of these variables were given to guard the reliability of the instrument; however, only the score for openness was used in the analysis.

Olson's inventory consists of both a parent form and an adolescent form, each comprised of a 20-item Likert type scale (see Appendixes 3 and 4 for a copy of the forms). The choices range from 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree, and 5 is strongly agree. The parent completes the form in reference to how he/she perceives his/her general communication with the adolescent. The adolescent completes a similar form in reference to how he/she perceives his/her general communication with the mother, and then again in reference to how he/she perceives his/her general communication with the father. Both the parent(s) and the adolescent re-do the inventory a second time with the questions focusing on their perceived communication about sexual behavior rather than about general issues (see Appendixes 5 and 6 for a copy of the forms).

Reliability figures for this inventory have been calculated from two samples of adolescents ($N_1$=925, $N_2$=916) drawn from several midwestern American high schools and universities. The adolescents in these samples ranged from 16 to 20 years. Figures were obtained both on the openness subscale and on that

scale measuring problems in family communication. The score for openness (the only subscale used) is .78. The complete scale has a reliability of .88. Factor loadings for the openness subscale range from .48 to .71, with only two scores being below .55.

Hawkins, Weisberg, and Ray's inventory. The researcher adapted Hawkins, Weisberg, and Ray's (1980) Communication Inventory to measure parent communication style as it relates to situations specific to some aspect of sexual/contraceptive behavior. The adapted inventory consisted of six situations. Each situation had four possible responses, indicative of the four communication styles of conventional, controlling, speculative, and contactful. For example, in response to a situation where a parent finds a packet of birth control pills in his/her daughter's purse, the parent would check the response indicating how he/she thinks he/she would most likely respond to that situation. One might choose to ignore it and put the pills back the way they were found (conventional); one might be cool to her boyfriend but not indicate what was wrong (controlling); one might indirectly try to find out what she is really doing or what she thinks about her behavior by discussing an article with her on the increasing rate of sexual activity among teens today

(speculative); or one might choose to tell her that they found the pills, that they were concerned, and ask her if she were seriously involved with someone (contactful). The participant chooses one of the four responses per situation. The adolescents, on a separate questionnaire, respond to the same situations in regards to how they think their parent would respond to those same situations. They give one response for their mother and one for their father, per situation (see Appendixes 7, 8, 9, and 10 for a copy of the inventories).

As indicated above, this questionnaire was an adaptation of one previously used by Hawkins, Weisberg, and Ray (1980) in which they measured communication in the martial dyad. The situations were changed from instances in martial communication to instances that the researcher thought were likely to happen between adolescents and parents, about that adolescent's sexual behavior. The measure, then, was made more relevant to the purpose of the present study. The responses were checked for face validity and accuracy by Dr. Hawkins (personal communication, March 15, 1985).

Sexual/contraceptive behavior. The 21 questions from this measure were chosen from three previously used and tested questionnaires: (a) A Sexual Knowledge,

Attitudes, and Practice measure developed by Dr. Kenneth Davidson (1975); (b) the questionnaire used by Zelnik and Kantner (1979) in their survey of adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior; and (c) a Guttman-type scale on sexual behavior developed by Newcomer and Udry (1984). Questions from these questionnaires were chosen on the basis of their usefulness first in categorizing adolescents into the three sexual/contraceptive behavior groups, and second, in obtaining a contraceptive history. This history began with the first sexual intercourse to the present. Of those questions selected, some had to be revised so that they were more specific to the type of information required in the present study. Responses were given mostly by checking a single response, with some ranking (see Appendix 11 for a copy of the questionnaire).

**Procedure**

The adolescents were contacted first. For those under 18 years of age, a consent form had to be signed by the parent before the adolescent could participate in the study (see Appendixes 12 and 13 for a copy of the parental consent forms). Each adolescent was administered their questionnaires as a packet. Included in the packet was a consent form for them to sign (see Appendixes 14 and 15 for a copy of the

consent forms for adolescent and parent). The consent form stated that the purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between family relationships and adolescent sexual behavior. It stressed that participation was voluntary, that all individual results were confidential, and that only group summaries could be sent to those who requested them. Also included in the packet was a form which asked for permission to contact their parent(s) to ask them to complete a similar questionnaire on family relationships (see Appendix 16 for a copy of the form).

The participant read instructions stating that he/she was to complete all sections of the questionnaire and in the order they were presented: Part One to be completed first, Part Two to be completed second, and so on to Part Four. Finally, the package included a letter thanking all participants for their involvement in the study (see Appendix 17 for a copy of the thank-you letter). A letter explaining the study was attached for the participants to keep (see Appendix 18 for a copy of the letter). They were asked to return the consent form in a smaller envelope provided. The questionnaire would be returned separately in a larger envelope. All envelopes were self-addressed and stamped.

Parents of those adolescents for whom I had been given permission to contact were then sent their questionnaires. Each parent received a separate packet. Codes of parents and adolescents of the same family were matched. A letter was attached, informing the parent(s) that their son/daughter had participated in the study, and it was stressed that their participation would further add to the study (see Appendix 19 for a copy of the letter). Each parent was sent a separate questionnaire, as well as a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which to return it. They were asked to complete the questionnaires alone, and without talking to anyone else about it.

After all the questionnaires had been returned, the adolescents and parents were debriefed separately, by letter, where possible (see Appendix 20 for a copy of the debriefing letter). Sometimes the family had to be debriefed together when the adolescent alone could not be contacted. In this letter, the study was explained in more detail, and participants were told how the results would be used. If additional information was desired by the participants, my phone number, as well as that of my advisor, was included. Also, two meeting times were offered to them for discussion of the study.

**Design and Analysis**

This study was a survey allowing static group comparisons. The predicted variable was adolescent sexual behavior. The predictor variables were gender, openness in parent-adolescent communication, and communication style. On the nominal data, chi square tests were done to determine if there was a significant difference in frequencies between the groups being studied. A t-test was completed on the ordinal data. Considering the amount of analysis done, and also to guard against a type I-error, a .01 level of significance was used in the testing of all hypotheses. For one question descriptive statistics were used to summarize the results.

# CHAPTER V

## RESULTS

The final analysis focused only on the sexual behavior of the adolescents, and did not, as was originally intended, include their contraceptive behavior. This was because many of the sexual behavior categories originally defined did not contain an adequate number of subjects (less than five) to give the results any degree of power. Therefore, for the purpose of increasing this power, some of the categories were collapsed or were eliminated from the study altogether. Those categories collapsed included the two groups of adolescents who had had sexual intercourse but in one group had not used contraception and in the other group had used contraception. There were only seven adolescents in the former group, and not wanting to decrease the adolescent sample even more, they were kept and combined with the latter group. As a result of this collapse, two groups, rather than three, became the focus: those who had not had sexual intercourse and those who had. For Question One, the conventional and controlling styles were collapsed because each category in itself contained less than five subjects. Conceptually,

collapsing these styles was meaningful because both are at the more closed end of the openness continuum. For the analysis of all hypotheses/questions, communication styles five to nine were eliminated (i.e., conventional-controlling, controlling-speculative, speculative-contactful, controlling-contactful, and Style Nine with an equal number of responses from each of the four original styles). Again, these categories consistently had too few subjects (N<5), and since they represented more than one single style, they could not be combined with other communication style categories.

In the following discussion, it is shown that, at the .01 level, only one hypothesis reached significance.

Hypothesis 1. There will be a relationship between mother's communication style, as perceived by the adolescent, and adolescent sexual behavior.

A $x^2$ value (2, N=57) of 8.03, p=.018, indicated that the relationship between mother's communication style and adolescent sexual behavior approached significance. Of the adolescents who reported that their mothers used one of the more closed styles, conventional or controlling, in communicating with them, 83% (n=47) had had sexual intercourse, 17% (n=10) had not. As the mother's communication style was perceived to be more open, the percentage of

adolescents who had never had sexual intercourse increased. Forty percent (n=23) of the adolescents who reported that their mothers used a speculative style of communication had not had intercourse. As the style was perceived to be not only high in openness, but also high in disclosure (contactful style), the percentage of adolescents not having sexual intercourse was 63% (n=36). It is shown, then, that, for this sample, a high degree of both openness and disclosure in the adolescent's perception of his/her mother's communication style is related to the number of adolescents having sexual intercourse.

**Hypothesis 2. There will be a relationship between father's communication style, as perceived by the adolescent, and adolescent sexual behavior.**

Contrary to the positive relationship between mother's closeness in communication style and adolescent sexual behavior, father's communication style was not found to be significantly related to that same behavior. The $x^2$ value for this analysis was 4.25 (3, N=54), p=.24.

**Question 1. What is the relationship between gender of adolescent, adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior, and parental openness, as perceived by the adolescent, in parent-adolescent communication about sexual behavior?**

The above question was summarized using descriptive statistics and in particular by observing a

difference in means. Daughters who had not had sexual intercourse reported a higher openness score for both their mothers (M=33.80, n=19, s=6.43) and fathers (M=28.26, n=19, s=7.68) than did those daughters who had had intercourse. Those daughters who had had intercourse reported a mean openness score of 29.13, n=31, s=8.45 for their mothers and for their fathers, a mean score of 24.44, n=27, s=8.85 (see Table 7).

Table 7

Adolescent Perception of Parent Openness (score form) on Sexual Behavior by Gender of Parent and Gender of Adolescent

| | | PARENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mother | | | Father | |
| ADOLESCENT | Have not had sex | Have had sex | Total | Have not had sex | Have had sex | Total |
| Daughter Mean Score | 33.79 | 29.13 | 62.92 | 28.26 | 24.44 | 52.70 |
| Daughter Frequency | 19 | 31 | 50 | 19 | 27 | 46 |
| Son Mean Score | 30.00 | 33.33 | 63.33 | 25.11 | 26.56 | 51.67 |
| Son Frequency | 9 | 9 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 18 |
| Total | 63.79 | 62.46 | 126.25 | 53.37 | 51.00 | 104.37 |
| Total | 28 | 40 | 68 | 28 | 36 | 64 |

For sons, those who had not had sexual intercourse also reported high openness scores for their mother (M=30, n=9, s=4.82) and father (M=25.11, n=9, s=5.56). Those who had had intercourse reported a mean openness score of 33.33, n=9, s=7.81 for their mothers and a mean score of 26.56, n=9, s=8.38 for their fathers.

Hypothesis 3. There will be a relationship between gender of parent, gender of adolescent, and communication style.

The data indicates that there was not a significant difference between how mothers communicate with their daughters and sons [(3, N=15), p=1.00]. Likewise, there was no significant difference between how fathers communicate with their daughters and sons [$x^2$=3.44 (3, N=11), p=.33].

Hypothesis 4. There will be a difference between mother and adolescent perception of mother's communication style as determined by Hawkins' measure of communication style.

A $x^2$ value of .58 (3, N=15), p=.90 indicated that there was no significant difference in how the mother and adolescent perceived the mother's communication style. Seventy-seven percent (n=12) of the mothers and adolescents agreed that mothers used a contactful style. Another 15% (n=2), however, disagreed on the style used by the mother. These adolescents saw the style as more closed (conventional and controlling), whereas their mothers saw their communication style as being contactful.

Hypothesis 5. There will be a difference between father and adolescent perception of father's communication style as determined by Hawkins' measure of communication style.

As with the mothers, fathers and their adolescents did not perceive the father's communication style to be

different [$x^2$=14.44 (9, N=11), p=.11]. Thirty-eight percent (n=4) of the fathers and adolescents agreed that fathers used a contactful style. However, 62% (n=7) of the adolescents again saw their fathers as more closed (conventional and controlling) than fathers saw themselves. Those fathers reported their communication style as contactful.

Hypothesis 6. There will be a difference between family openness in general communication and family openness in communication about sexual behavior, as perceived by the adolescent.

As predicted, parents were reported as being significantly more open in communicating about general matters (M=33.43, s=7.04) than in communicating about sexual matters (M=28.49, s=6.65), t(68)=-9.21, #P≤.01.

One post hoc analysis was done. It showed the following results:

Post Hoc 1. There will be a difference in the adolescents perception of parental communication style for subjects whose parents participated and those whose parents did not participate.

Adolescents in this sample did not perceive the communication style of the mother to be significantly different between families where the mother did participate and families where the mother did not participate [$x^2$=7.35 (3, N=57), p=.06]. Likewise, the fathers style was not perceived to be significantly different between families where the father did

participate and families where he did not participate [$x^2$=1.43 (3, N=54), p=.70]. It is interesting to note that of those parents who did participate, more (87.5% of the mothers and 42% of the fathers) were reported as using the contactful style than any other style. Thirty-five percent of the fathers were perceived as being conventional. However, the parents who did not participate were also seen as being more contactful (51% of the mothers and 35% of the fathers).

# CHAPTER VI

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between parent communication style and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior. However, because of the small number (n=7) of adolescents who had had intercourse but who had not used contraception, this group was collapsed with the group of adolescents who had also had intercourse but who had used contraception. The small number in the former group could be attributed just to the small overall sample size or possibly to the older age of the adolescents (M=18), an age when the likelihood of using contraceptives might be greater. Nevertheless, the end result was that the frequency or effectiveness of contraceptive use in adolescents could not be discussed; the focus could only be on whether or not the adolescent had had sexual intercourse and how that related to parent communication style. Despite these limiting parameters and even with this small and biased sample, some significant differences were found in the data.

As supported by the literature (Fox, 1980; Miller & Simon, 1974), the findings indicated that as mother's communication style was perceived as being more open and more disclosed, the number of adolescents having had sexual intercourse decreased. This finding, however, did not hold true in reference to the relationship between father's communication style and adolescent sexual behavior. This difference between mother and father could be partially explained first by the finding that mothers in this sample were more often perceived as contactful than were the fathers (n=20). More openness and disclosure on the part of the mother might have allowed her more opportunities to directly influence the sexual behavior of the adolescents. It could be that if a larger sample of fathers had been obtained, the number perceived as being contactful may have been greater, possibly changing the level of significance between openness and disclosure in father's communication and adolescent sexual behavior. Second, higher openness and disclosure on the part of the mother was related to importance of religion to the adolescent (as defined by Davidson, 1975). Such importance may have influenced the adolescent to adopt stricter standards for their sexual behavior. This same relationship between father's communication style

and adolescent religiousity (defined by Davidson, 1975) did not exist. These findings could indicate several things. Possibly the mother's openness and disclosure contributed to the importance of religion to the adolescent. The openness and disclosure may have made it easier for the mother to share her religious values and beliefs with the adolescent, if religion was important to her. Conversely, having an adolescent to whom religion was important could have encouraged the mother to be more open and more willing to disclose. The parent-child relationship may be different with adolescents who consider religion important than with those who do not. It may even be that it was only that adolescent's religiousity and not the mother's communication style that was related to the adolescent's decision not to have sexual intercourse. Even if it was mother's communication style that was the intervening variable, it has not been documented how mother's openness and disclosure, in particular, may influence or be influenced by adolescent religiousity. Thus it remains uncertain whether adolescent religiousity or gender differences can be used in explaining this finding that mothers' and fathers' communication styles are related differently to adolescent sexual behavior. This is a question needing further testing.

The above discussion focused on the relationship between both parental openness and parental disclosure to adolescent sexual behavior. By using a second measure of parental openness, it was possible to isolate its relation, from that of disclosure, to adolescent sexual behavior. In this second analysis, adolescents who had not had intercourse again reported higher openness scores for their mothers. However, these same adolescents, in this measure, also reported higher openness scores for their fathers. It remains difficult to explain why, when openness and disclosure were measured together (in Hawkins), this same relationship for fathers was not evident. Possibly, this discrepancy could be attributed to the difference in the measures themselves. Fathers were perceived as being more open when asked to respond to specific situations dealing with their adolescent's sexual behavior. They were more closed in their responses to general statements about the same. It could be argued that the situations were more realistic than the general statements, and prompted a more accurate response from the fathers. On this topic, it is not known through previous research how fathers have traditionally communicated with their adolescent(s) about sexual behavior, and how their communication

style may differ from the mothers. It is noted that this was one of the weaknesses of the literature. For clarification and/or support, this is a concept needing further investigation. This investigation, with a larger sample, is also needed to strengthen the above mentioned data.

A second major finding of this study, and one which follows from the above, is that, for this sample, there was an effect of gender, both of the parents and of the adolescents. Concerning the parents, although both the mothers and fathers were found to use a contactful style more than any other style, mothers used it more with their sons (100% of the time) than with their daughters (82%). Fathers used it more often with their daughters (75% of the time) than sons (67%). It could be the old practice of fathers finding it difficult to talk to their sons, who then must rely on the mother for more open discussion. Daughters may find it less threatening to develop this relationship with either parent. In fact, this is supported in the literature (Baker, 1979). However, for elaboration and clarification, this hypothesis needs to be tested further.

A second difference found by gender of parent was that while 75% of the mothers and adolescents agreed on

the communication style used by the mother, only 38% of the fathers and adolescents agreed on the fathers style. The fact that 62% of the fathers thought they were contactful when their adolescents thought they were more closed (conventional and controlling) suggests two things: fathers may have difficulty perceiving or talking about actual concerns or problems that their adolescents may have, and likewise, adolescents may have difficulty approaching the father about these concerns. As to why fathers agree less than mothers about their own communication styles, it may be that because he is more often conventional and controlling, he would have less opportunity to receive feedback from his adolescent regarding his approach. This could foster a belief that that approach is different than it actually is. Moreover, and in addition, the difference between mothers and fathers regarding agreement on their respective communication styles may simply be attributed to differences in how each gender realistically perceives the communication process. There is no evidence to support a difference in how mothers and fathers view communicating about sexuality with adolescents.

A gender effect was also indicated for adolescents. Increased parental openness was

associated with a lower incidence of sexual intercourse in daughters. However, sons who had had intercourse also reported high openness scores for their parents. The possibility is indicated, then, that parents have less influence on their son's sexual behavior than their daughter's, or that they influence it in a different way. Possibly, as reported in the literature (Shapiro, 1980), the existing double standard interplays with parent's communication style to produce this difference in the relationship between parental openness and male and female adolescent sexual behavior. This is theoretical, and presents yet another concept to be tested.

A third and final point to note was that parents were found to be less open in discussing sexual behavior than they were in discussing general matters. In Hypothesis Four and Five it was shown that adolescents perceive their parents to be more closed than the parents think they are themselves. This is confounded by the above finding in that not only, then, may some adolescents think parents are more closed than the parents think they are, but that the parents are perceived as being even more closed about sexual behavior. In light of the previous discussion on the relation of parental closedness to adolescent sexual

behavior, this finding identifies a definite area of concern for parent educators.

While these findings offer some support to the present literature on how parents' communication style is related to adolescent sexual behavior, most did not reach significance. Those, however, which did reach or did approach significance have clarified and extended the literature. Moving from a more quantitative discussion about amount or topics of communication about sexuality, it can be said that, for this sample, the actual degree of parental openness and disclosure in that communication was related to the sexual behavior of the adolescent. Also adding to the literature was the indication that the mothers and fathers communicated differently with their sons and daughters about sexual behavior. In regard to their sexual behavior, those sons and daughters responded differently to the same parental communication style. These findings offer interesting hypotheses to be tested with a larger sample.

# CHAPTER VII

# IMPLICATIONS

In the introduction, it was stated that one of the objectives of this study was to give added direction to family educators in planning parent education programs. The final question, then, is what are the implications of these findings for those programs? Two points are emphasized. First, the study indicated that parental openness varied with the number of adolescents having or not having had sexual intercourse. Adolescents who had not had intercourse perceived their mothers as being more open and more willing to disclose. With the aim, then, of decreasing the number of adolescent pregnancies, one task for family educators will be to devise/strengthen programs which will assist parents in maintaining or developing this openness and ability to disclose in discussing sexual behavior with their adolescent(s). The fact that parents have more difficulty talking about sexual behavior than about general matters suggests the presence of barriers, and the need to acquire the knowledge and skills to begin to overcome the barriers. This may involve a process of becoming more comfortable with their own values, beliefs, and attitudes about sexual behavior. This

process of assisting parents to become effective sex educators of their children becomes more important as the advocacy for sex education in the home increases (Darling & Hicks, 1982; Weston, 1980). Second, added attention needs to be given to the communicative process between fathers and adolescents. It may be that fathers need added help in becoming more open and more willing to disclose, or in becoming more aware of how they may actually be communicating with their adolescent. Conversely, or in addition, adolescents may have stereotyped their fathers as being closed about sexual behavior, and thus need to become more willing to explore their relationship with their fathers. Ideally, this education endeavour could extend to the whole family system, for the purpose of identifying and clarifying the perceptions of each family member. Such clarification may help alleviate or prevent communication barriers.

To continue to improve research on this topic of sexuality education by parents, there is first the need to obtain larger and more representative samples. This would increase the power of those studies. It would also, in a study such as this one, increase the probability that the contraceptive behavior of adolescents could be included in the analysis, and its

relation to parent communication style identified. More refined instruments need to be developed, for measuring both parent communication style and adolescent sexual behavior. Especially in the case of parent communication style, there is a need for instruments which measure that style as it relates to matters dealing specifically with adolescent sexual behavior.

Finally, a survey of other aspects of communication (e.g., non-verbal, content versus process) would strengthen this area of research and broaden its application. Research on parental communication and adolescent sexual/contraceptive behavior could then be used by family educators in assisting parents to begin to play a more effective role in decreasing the number of teenage pregnancies.

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Appendix 1 NO._____

SECTION THREE: Please complete this section last.

PARENT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please indicate whether you are:

_____ 1. Mother
_____ 2. Stepmother
_____ 3. Father
_____ 4. Stepfather
_____ 5. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

2. What is your age: _____
(age)

3. What is your occupation: _____
(occupation)

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed:

_____ 1. no schooling
_____ 2. elementary
_____ 3. junior high
_____ 4. high school
_____ 5. diploma/certificate (vocational/technical, nursing school, dental hygiene)
_____ 6. university:
_____ bachelor's degree
_____ post-graduate degree (master's, doctorate)

5. What is your religion, if any:

_____ 1. Protestant
(SPECIFY DENOMINATION) _____

_____ 2. Roman Catholic

_____ 3. Eastern Orthodox

_____ 4. Eastern Non-Christian
(SPECIFY) _____

_____ 5. Jewish

_____ 6. Other (SPECIFY) _____

_____ 7. None

6. How important would you say religion is to you. It is:

_____ 1. very important

_____ 2. fairly important

_____ 3. fairly unimportant

_____ 4. not important at all

7. On the average, how often do you attend a church event (including church services). (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE CATEGORY AND USE A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF TIMES.)

_____ 1. Times per month
or
_____ 2. Times per year

8. With what ethnic background do you identify:

_____
(ethnic background)

Appendix 2 NO._____

SECTION FOUR: Please complete this section last.

ADOLESCENT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your sex: (check one)

_____ 1. Male

_____ 2. Female

2. What is your birthdate: _____/_____/_____
day month year

3. Please list all members of your immediate family (e.g. mother, stepfather, sister, half-brother, etc.) according to your relationship with them, their age, and the number of years you lived with them.

| | RELATIONSHIP | AGE | NUMBER OF YEARS THEY LIVED WITH YOU |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |
| 7. | | | |
| 8. | | | |
| 9. | | | |
| 10. | | | |

4. Do you presently live with all members of this family:

_____ YES

_____ NO

IF YOU ANSWERED "NO" TO QUESTION #4, where do you presently live:

_____ residence

_____ apartment/house

_____ other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

Do you live alone:

_____ YES

_____ NO

IF YOU DO NOT LIVE ALONE, please list the people with whom you presently live, according to your relationship with them, and the amount of time (weeks, months, years) you have lived with them:

| Relationship | Amount of Time Living With Them |
|---|---|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

5. What is your religion, if any:

_____ 1. Protestant (SPECIFY DENOMINATION) _____

_____ 2. Roman Catholic

_____ 3. Eastern Orthodox

_____ 4. Eastern Non-Christian (SPECIFY) _____

_____ 5. Jewish

_____ 6. Other (SPECIFY) _____

_____ 7. None

6. How important would you say religion is to you:

_____ 1. very important
_____ 2. fairly important
_____ 3. fairly unimportant
_____ 4. not important at all

7. On the average, how often do you attend a church event (including church services). (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE CATEGORY AND USE A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF TIMES.)

_____ 1. Times per month
or
_____ 2. Times per year

8. With what ethnic background do you identify:

_____
(ethnic background)

Appendix 3 NO._____

SECTION ONE:
Please complete this section first. _____ Father
_____ Mother

PARENT FORM
(General Communication)

INSTRUCTIONS: For each question, circle the number which most closely describes how you and your teenager communicate in general. Please answer the questions in reference to your teenager who filled out the questionnaires for this study.

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can discuss my beliefs with my teenager without feeling restrained or embarrassed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my teenager tells me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager is always a good listener. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am sometimes afraid to ask my teenager for what I want. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager can tell how I'm feeling without asking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am very satisfied with how my teenager and I talk together. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| If I were in trouble, I could tell my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I openly show affection to my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When we are having a problem, I often give my teenager the silent treatment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am careful about what I say to my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When talking with my teenager, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager tries to understand my point of view. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| There are some topics I avoid discussing with my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I find it easy to discuss problems with my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager nags/bothers me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager insults me when he/she is angry with me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I don't think I can tell my teenager how I really feel about some things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

NOTE: Make sure you have left no responses blank and that you have circled one and only one number for each question. You should have exactly 20 numbers circled.

Appendix 4 NO._____

SECTION ONE: Please complete this section first.

TEEN FORM
(General Communication)

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions ask you to describe general communication between you and your male and female parent (if both are applicable). For each item, first circle the number which most closely describes how you and your father (stepfather, etc.) communicate in general. Second, circle the number which most closely describes how you and your mother (stepmother, etc.) communicate in general.

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | COMMUNICATION WITH FATHER | | | | | COMMUNICATION WITH MOTHER | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can discuss my beliefs with my father/mother without feeling restrained or embarrassed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my father/mother tells me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother is always a good listener. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am sometimes afraid to ask my father/mother for what I want. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother can tell how I'm feeling without asking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | COMMUNICATION WITH FATHER | | | | | COMMUNICATION WITH MOTHER | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My father/mother has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am very satisfied with how my father/mother and I talk together. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I were in trouble, I could tell my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I openly show affection to my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When we are having a problem, I often give my father/mother the silent treatment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am careful about what I say to my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When talking to my father/mother, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother tries to understand my point of view. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| There are topics I avoid discussing with my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | COMMUNICATION WITH FATHER | | | | | COMMUNICATION WITH MOTHER | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I find it easy to discuss problems with my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother nags/bothers me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother insults me when he/she is angry with me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I don't think I can tell my father/mother how I really feel about some things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

NOTE: Make sure you have left no responses blank and that you have circled one and only one number for father, and then one and only one for mother. You should have exactly 40 numbers circled.

Appendix 5 NO._____

_____ Mother

_____ Father

PARENT FORM
(Communication about Sexual Behavior)

INSTRUCTIONS: For each question, circle the number which most closely describes how you and your teenager communicate about sexual behavior. Please answer the questions in reference to your teenager who filled out the questionnaires for this study.

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can discuss my beliefs about sexual behavior with my teenager without feeling restrained or embarrassed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my teenager tells me about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager is a good listener when I talk about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am sometimes afraid to ask my teenager for what I want. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager has a tendency to say things to me about sexual behavior which would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager can tell how I'm feeling without asking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am very satisfied with how my teenager and I talk together about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I were in trouble involving any aspect of sexual behavior, I could tell my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I openly show affection to my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When we are having a problem about any aspect of sexual behavior, I often give my teenager the silent treatment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am careful about what I say to my teenager about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When talking to my teenager about sexual behavior, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I ask questions about sexual behavior, I get honest answers from my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager tries to understand my point of view about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| There are some aspects of sexual behavior that I avoid discussing with my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I find it easy to discuss problems involving some aspect of sexual behavior with my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings about sexual behavior to my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager nags/bothers me about his/her sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My teenager insults me when he/she is angry with me about some aspect of sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I don't think I can tell my teenager how I really feel about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

NOTE: Make sure you have left no responses blank and that you have circled one and only one number for each question. You should have exactly 20 numbers circled.

Appendix 6 NO._____

TEEN FORM
(Communication about Sexual Behavior)

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions ask you to describe how you and your male and female parent (if both are applicable) communicate about sexual behavior. For each item, first circle the number which most closely describes how you and your father (stepfather, etc.) communicate about sexual behavior. Second, circle the number which most closely describes how you and your mother (stepmother, etc.) communicate about sexual behavior.

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | COMMUNICATION WITH FATHER | | | | | COMMUNICATION WITH MOTHER | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can discuss my beliefs about sexual behavior with my father/mother without feeling restrained or embarrassed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my father/mother tells me about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother is a good listener when I talk about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am sometimes afraid to ask my father/mother for what I want. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother can tell how I'm feeling without asking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | COMMUNICATION WITH FATHER | | | | | COMMUNICATION WITH MOTHER | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My father/mother has a tendency to say things to me about sexual behavior which would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am very satisfied with how my father/mother and I talk together about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I were in any trouble involving any aspect of sexual behavior, I could tell my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I openly show affection to my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When we are having a problem concerning any aspect of sexual behavior, I often give my father/mother the silent treatment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am careful about what I say to my father/mother about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When talking to my father/mother about sexual behavior, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I ask questions about sexual behavior, I get honest answers from my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

RESPONSE CHOICES

| 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Moderately Disagree | 3 Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | COMMUNICATION WITH FATHER | | | | | COMMUNICATION WITH MOTHER | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My father/mother tries to understand my point of view about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| There are aspects of sexual behavior that I avoid discussing with my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I find it easy to discuss problems regarding sexual behavior with my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings about sexual behavior to my father/mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother nags/bothers me about my sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father/mother insults me when he/she is angry with me about some aspect of sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I don't think I can tell my father/mother how I really feel about sexual behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

NOTE: Make sure you have left no responses blank and that you have circled one and only one number for father, and then one and only one for mother. You should have exactly 40 numbers circled.

Appendix 7 NO._____

SECTION TWO: Please complete this section second.

PARENT FORM
(Daughter)

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each situation, and place a check beside the response you would be most likely to give in each particular situation.

Please indicate here whether you are:

_____ Father
_____ Stepfather
_____ Mother
_____ Stepmother
_____ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

SITUATION #1

A 16-year old daughter announces to her parents that she will be attending an unchaperoned, all-night party, at which there will be both males and females. If your daughter told you this, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would say, "How will you get home?"

_____ Until she went to that party, I would crab around the house, but never directly bring the subject of the party up.

_____ I would say, "I have some feelings about that. Would you be willing to talk about them?"

_____ I would say, "What do you think of these parties?"

SITUATION #2

The parent has discovered that his/her 14-year old daughter has been having intercourse regularly with a 16-year old boy named David. If this was your daughter, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would choose to ignore it, acting as if I didn't know anything about it.

_____ I would set an earlier curfew for her, and restrict the number of nights she was allowed out per week.

_____ I would say, "I've noticed that you've been going out with David a lot lately. Is it getting serious?"

_____ I would tell the daughter that I knew she was having intercourse, was worried, and ask her if she would like to talk to me about it.

SITUATION #3

A 15-year old daughter has been dating the same boy for several months now. She approaches a parent to ask about birth control. If this was your daughter, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would say, "Why do you want to know?"

_____ I would say, "I thought they taught you that in school. By the way, how's school going?"

_____ I would say, "I'm glad you came to me. Is the relationship that serious?"

_____ I would say, "Well it's about time considering the life you've been leading!"

SITUATION #4

The parent finds a packet of birth control pills in his/her daughter's purse. If this was your daughter, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would show her an article discussing the increasing rate of sexual activity among teens today, and ask if she knew if any of her friends were having sex.

_____ I would tell her that I had found the pills and wanted to know what it meant. I would ask her if she was seriously involved with someone.

_____ I would place everything back in the purse exactly as I found it, pretending not to have found the pills.

_____ I would be cool to the boyfriend when he came to the house, but never suggest that I knew they were having intercourse.

Appendix 8 NO._____

SECTION TWO: Please complete this section second.

PARENT FORM

(Son)

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each situation, and place a check beside the response you would be most likely to give in each particular situation.

Please indicate here whether you are:

_____ Father

_____ Stepfather

_____ Mother

_____ Stepmother

_____ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

SITUATION #1

A 16-year old son announces to his parents that he will be attending an unchaperoned, all-night party, at which there will be both males and females. If your son told you this, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would say, "How will you get home?"

_____ Until he went to that party, I would crab around the house, but never directly bring the subject of the party up.

_____ I would say, "I have some feelings about that. Would you be willing to talk about them?"

_____ I would say, "What do you think of these parties?"

SITUATION #2

The parent has discovered that his/her 16-year old son is having intercourse with a 14-year old woman named Jan on a regular basis. If this was your son, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would say, "I've noticed that you've been spending a lot of time with Jan lately. The two of you seem quite close. Is there anything you'd like to talk to me about?"

_____ I would choose to ignore it, acting as if I didn't know anything about it.

_____ I would tell the son that I knew he was sexually involved with Jan, was worried, and ask him if he would like to talk to me about it.

_____ I would restrict the number of nights he was allowed to use the car, and demand that he have it home earlier.

SITUATION #3

A 15-year old son has been dating the same girl for several months now. He approaches a parent to ask about birth control. If this was your son, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would say, "Why do you want to know?"

_____ I would say, "I thought they taught you that in school. By the way, how's school going?"

_____ I would say, "I'm glad you came to me. Is the relationship that serious?"

_____ I would say, "Well it's about time considering the life you've been leading!"

SITUATION #4

The parent finds a condom in his/her 16-year old son's clothes. If this was your son, your response would most likely be:

_____ I would put the condom back exactly where I found it, pretending not to have found it.

_____ I would show him an article discussing the increasing rate of sexual activity among teens today, and ask him if he knew if any of his friends were having sex.

_____ I would be cool to his girlfriend when she came to the house, but never suggest that I knew they were having sex.

_____ I would tell him that I found the condom and wanted to know what it meant. I would ask him if he was seriously involved with someone.

Appendix 9 NO._____

SECTION TWO: Please complete this section second.

FEMALE TEEN FORM

The following questions ask you about relationships between you and your parent(s). Please indicate below about whom you will answer the questions. (CHECK ONE FOR FEMALE PARENT AND ONE FOR MALE PARENT, IF APPLICABLE.)

| FEMALE PARENT | MALE PARENT |
|---|---|
| ____ Mother | ____ Father |
| ____ Stepmother | ____ Stepfather |
| ____ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____ | ____ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY_____ |

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions in reference to your male and female parent. Read each situation, and under the column "FATHER", place a check beside the response your father, stepfather, mother's boyfriend, etc., would most likely give in that situation. Then, under the column "MOTHER", place a check beside the response your mother, stepmother, father's girlfriend, etc., would most likely give in that same situation. CHECK ONLY ONE OF THE FOUR POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR FATHER AND ONE FOR MOTHER.

SITUATION #1

A 16-year old girl announces to her parents that she will be attending an unchaperoned, all-night party, at which there will be both males and females. If you told your father or mother this, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "How will you get home?" |
| _____ | _____ | Until I went to the party, he/she would crab around the house, but never directly bring the subject of the party up. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I have some feelings about that. Would you be willing to talk about them?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "What do you think of those parties?" |

SITUATION #2

The parent has discovered that his/her 14-year old daughter has been having intercourse regularly with a 16-year old boy named David. If this was your father or mother, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would choose to ignore it, acting as if he/she didn't know anything about it. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would set an earlier curfew for me, and restrict the number of nights I was allowed out per week. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I've noticed that you've been going out with David a lot lately. Is it getting serious?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would tell me that he/she knew I was having intercourse, was worried, and ask me if I would like to talk to him/her about it. |

SITUATION #3

A 15-year old girl has been dating the same boy for several months now. She approaches a parent to ask about birth control. If this was your father or mother, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "Why do you want to know?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I thought they taught you that in school. By the way, how's school going?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I'm glad you came to me. Is the relationship that serious?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "Well, it's about time considering the life you've been leading!" |

SITUATION #4

The parent finds a packet of birth control pills in his/her daughter's purse. If this was your father or mother, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would show me an article discussing the increasing rate of sexual activity among teens today, and ask if I knew if any of my friends were having sex. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would tell me that he/she had found the pills and wanted to know what it meant. He/she would ask me if I was seriously involved with someone. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would place everything back in my purse exactly as he/she found it, pretending not to have found the pills. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would be cool to my boyfriend when he came to the house, but never suggest that he/she knew we were having intercourse. |

Appendix 10 NO._____

SECTION TWO: Please complete this section second.

MALE TEEN FORM

The following questions ask you about relationships between you and your parent(s). Please indicate below about whom you will answer the questions. (CHECK ONE FOR FEMALE PARENT AND ONE FOR MALE PARENT, IF APPLICABLE.)

| FEMALE PARENT | MALE PARENT |
|---|---|
| ____ Mother | ____ Father |
| ____ Stepmother | ____ Stepfather |
| ____ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____ | ____ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY_____ |

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions in reference to your male and female parent. Read each situation, and under the column "FATHER", place a check beside the response your father, stepfather, mother's boyfriend, etc., would most likely give in that situation. Then, under the column "MOTHER", place a check beside the response your mother, stepmother, father's girlfriend, etc., would most likely give in that same situation. CHECK ONLY ONE OF THE FOUR POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR FATHER AND ONE FOR MOTHER.

SITUATION #1

A 16-year old boy announces to his parents that he will be attending an unchaperoned, all-night party, at which there will be both males and females. If you told your father or mother this, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "How will you get home?" |
| _____ | _____ | Until I went to the party, he/she would crab around the house, but never directly bring the subject of the party up. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I have some feelings about that. Would you be willing to talk about them?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "What do you think of those parties?" |

SITUATION #2

The parent has discovered that his/her 16-year old son is having intercourse with a 14-year old woman named Jan on a regular basis. If this was your father or mother, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I've noticed that you've been spending a lot of time with Jan lately. The two of you seem quite close. Is there anything you'd like to talk to me about?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would choose to ignore it, acting as if he/she didn't know anything about it. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would tell me that he/she knew I was sexually involved with Jan, was worried, and ask me if I would like to talk to him/her about it. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would restrict the number of nights I was allowed to use the car, and demand that I have it home early. |

SITUATION #3

A 15-year old boy has been dating the same girl for several months now. He approaches a parent to ask about birth control. If this was your father or mother, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "Why do you want to know?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I thought they taught you that in school. By the way, how's school going?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "I'm glad you came to me. Is the relationship that serious?" |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would say, "Well, it's about time considering the life you've been leading!" |

SITUATION #4

The parent finds a condom in his/her 16-year old son's clothes. If this was your father or mother, his/her response would most likely be:

| FATHER | MOTHER | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | He/she would put the condom back exactly as he/she found it, pretending not to have found it. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would show me an article discussing the increasing rate of sexual activity among teens today, and ask if I knew if any of my friends were having sex. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would be cool to my girlfriend when she came to the house, but never suggest that he/she knew we were having sex. |
| _____ | _____ | He/she would tell me that he/she found the condom and wanted to know what it meant. He/she would ask me if I was seriously involved with someone. |

Appendix 11 NO._____

SECTION THREE: Please complete this section third.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SEXUAL & CONTRACEPTIVE BEHAVIOR

CURRENT DATING STATUS

1. What is your current dating status (check only one category):

_____ 1. not dating

_____ 2. casual dating with person(s) of the opposite sex

_____ 3. casual dating with person(s) of the same sex

_____ 4. going with person of the opposite sex

_____ 5. going with person of the same sex

_____ 6. pre-engaged to person of the opposite sex

_____ 7. pre-engaged to person of the same sex

_____ 8. engaged to person of the opposite sex

_____ 9. engaged to person of the same sex

_____ 10. living and romantically involved with person of the opposite sex

_____ 11. living and romantically involved with person of the same sex

_____ 12. other (SPECIFY) _____

2. Which of the following sexual activities have you ever engaged in (CHECK ALL APPLICABLE CATEGORIES):

_____ 1. no more than kissing

_____ 2. necking

_____ 3. petting

_____ 4. sexual intercourse

3. Sometimes people refer to sexual intercourse as "making love", "having sex", or "going all the way". Have you ever had this experience:

_____ 1. YES

_____ 2. NO

IF NO, THAT IS, YOU HAVE NEVER HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, ANSWER QUESTION #4 ONLY.

IF YES, THAT IS, YOU HAVE HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, SKIP QUESTION #4 AND GO TO QUESTION #5.

IF NEVER EXPERIENCED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE:

4. Which three of the following reasons do you consider most important in your decision not to have sexual intercourse? Rank those reasons with regard to their degree of importance, with 1-most important, 2-second most important, 3-third most important. (RANK ONLY YOUR THREE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS.) WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED THIS QUESTION, YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

_____ 1. feel it is wrong before marriage

_____ 2. fear of pregnancy

_____ 3. religious reasons

_____ 4. fear of parental disapproval

_____ 5. fear of social disapproval other than parents

_____ 6. fear of sexually transmitted diseases

_____ 7. do not like potential partner

_____ 8. no desire

_____ 9. lack of opportunity

_____ 10. want to save myself for the right person

_____ 11. do not love potential partner

_____ 12. other (SPECIFY) _____

_____ 13. other (SPECIFY) _____

_____ 14. other (SPECIFY) _____

IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE:

5. How old were you when you first had sexual intercourse:

_____
(age in years)

6. At that time, were you:

_____ 1. engaged to partner
_____ 2. going steady with partner
_____ 3. casually dating partner
_____ 4. just friends with partner
_____ 5. just met partner
_____ 6. other (SPECIFY) _____

7. Had you planned to have intercourse the first time or did it just happen:

_____ 1. planned
_____ 2. thought about but not planned
_____ 3. just happened

8. Did you and your partner discuss using contraception before having sexual intercourse:

_____ 1. yes
_____ 2. no

9. Did you think you were using a contraceptive method the first time you had sexual intercourse:

_____ 1. yes
_____ 2. no

IF NO, THAT IS, YOU KNEW YOU WERE NOT USING A CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD, SKIP QUESTIONS #10, 11 and 12, AND GO TO QUESTION #13.

IF YES, THAT IS, YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE USING A CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD, CONTINUE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS #10 - 12.

10. Which method did you use for contraception the first time you had sexual intercourse:

_____ 1. withdrawal
_____ 2. rhythm, safe period, or safe time of the month
_____ 3. douche, or "washing out" to prevent pregnancy
_____ 4. birth control pills
_____ 5. foam, cream, jelly, or suppository
_____ 6. IUD - "coil", "loop", or "shield"
_____ 7. diaphragm
_____ 8. diaphragm with foam, cream, or jelly
_____ 9. condom or rubber
_____ 10. condom with foam, cream, or jelly
_____ 11. other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

11. What was the <u>one</u> <u>main</u> reason for choosing that method of contraception:

_____ 1. only one I knew
_____ 2. thought it was the most effective
_____ 3. lower cost
_____ 4. easy to obtain
_____ 5. easy to use
_____ 6. no harmful side effects
_____ 7. medical recommendation
_____ 8. partner's decision
_____ 9. only thing available at the time
_____ 10. other (SPECIFY) _____

12. Where did you first learn about this method:

_____ 1. sex education course
_____ 2. friends
_____ 3. parents
_____ 4. partner
_____ 5. medical facility personnel
_____ 6. other (SPECIFY) _____

SKIP QUESTION #13 AND GO TO QUESTION #14.

ANSWER #13 IF NO CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD WAS USED AT THE FIRST SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.

13. What was the <u>one</u> <u>main</u> reason for not using contraception:

_____ 1. didn't know of any
_____ 2. don't think they are effective
_____ 3. high cost
_____ 4. difficult to obtain
_____ 5. difficult to use
_____ 6. fear of harmful side effects
_____ 7. wanted to consult medical personnel first
_____ 8. partner didn't want me to
_____ 9. nothing available at the time
_____ 10. didn't think I would get pregnant
_____ 11. other (SPECIFY) _____

IF, AFTER THE FIRST TIME, YOU CONTINUED TO HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, ANSWER QUESTIONS #14 - 17.

IF, AFTER THE FIRST TIME, YOU DID NOT HAVE INTERCOURSE AGAIN, YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

14. Did you and your partner use a contraceptive method during sexual intercourse:

_____ 1. always
_____ 2. frequently
_____ 3. seldom
_____ 4. never

15. What method(s) did or do you most often use for contraception:

_____ 1. withdrawal
_____ 2. rhythm, safe period, or safe time of month
_____ 3. douche, or "washing out" to prevent pregnancy
_____ 4. birth control pills
_____ 5. foam, cream, jelly, or suppository
_____ 6. IUD - "coil", "loop", or "shield"
_____ 7. diaphragm
_____ 8. diaphragm with foam, cream, or jelly
_____ 9. condom or rubber
_____ 10. condom with foam, cream, or jelly
_____ 11. other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____
_____ 12. none

IF YOU ANSWERED "ALWAYS" OR "FREQUENTLY" TO QUESTION #14:

16. When did you start using a contraceptive method regularly (i.e. from the first time, after 2 weeks, after 6 months, etc.)

_____
(when started to use contraceptive method)

IF YOU ANSWERED "SELDOM" OR "NEVER" TO QUESTION #14:

17. What is the <u>one</u> <u>main</u> reason why you and your partner have not or are not using contraception during sexual intercourse:

_____ 1. don't know of any
_____ 2. don't think they are effective
_____ 3. high cost
_____ 4. difficult to obtain
_____ 5. difficult to use
_____ 6. fear of harmful side effects
_____ 7. want to consult medical personnel first
_____ 8. partner doesn't want me to
_____ 9. nothing available at the time
_____ 10. don't think I will get pregnant
_____ 11. other (SPECIFY) _____

Appendix 12 NO._____

Dear Parent,

This letter is to ask you for permission to let your daughter participate in a study to be conducted by Colleen MacDougall, a graduate student from the Family Studies Department, University of Alberta. The purpose of this study is to determine the association between family relationships and teenage sexual behavior. Such information may be very helpful to us and other family educators in planning family life programs.

If your daughter participates, she will be asked to complete several questionnaires. Some questionnaires will focus on family relationships, and will ask her to respond to such items as:

"I can discuss my anger with my father/mother", and

"I do not feel embarrassed discussing contraception with my father/mother".

A final questionnaire will ask her questions about her sexual behavior;

i.e. Sometimes people refer to sexual intercourse as 'making love', 'having sex', or 'going all the way'. Have you ever had this experience:

_____ 1. Yes

_____ 2. No

IF NEVER EXPERIENCED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE: which of the three following reasons do you consider most important in your decision not to have sexual intercourse:

- list of reasons given, such as "It is against my values".

The study will take place at a designated center (of which you will be informed), and will take no more than one hour of your daughter's time. We must emphasize that we are only concerned with group answers, and will keep every teenager's score completely anonymous. We will not release individual answers to any source, under any circumstances.

We would like to encourage you to let your daughter participate in this study. We think it will be a valuable experience for her, and would like to have as many teenagers as possible participate. You may be contacted at a later date to give your perception of the nature of the relationships within your family.

If you have any questions, please call Colleen MacDougall at 439-8816, or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 432-4191.

Thank you for your time.

Colleen MacDougall
Researcher
Department of Family Studies
University of Alberta

Dr. Nancy Hurlbut
Assistant Professor
Department of Family Studies
University of Alberta

---

_____ has my permission to participate in Colleen MacDougall's study on family relationships and teenage sexual behavior.

(adolescent's name)

_____ _____

Parent's Signature Date

Winter, 1985

Appendix 13 NO._____

Dear Parent,

This letter is to ask you for permission to let your son participate in a study to be conducted by Colleen MacDougall, a graduate student from the Family Studies Department, University of Alberta. The purpose of this study is to determine the association between family relationships and teenage sexual behavior. Such information may be very helpful to us and other family educators in planning family life programs.

If your son participates, he will be asked to complete several questionnaires. Some questionnaires will focus on family relationships, and will ask him to respond to such items as:

"I can discuss my anger with my father/mother", and

"I do not feel embarrassed discussing contraception with my father/mother".

A final questionnaire will ask him questions about his sexual behavior;

i.e. Sometimes people refer to sexual intercourse as 'making love', 'having sex', or 'going all the way'. Have you ever had this experience:

_____ 1. Yes

_____ 2. No

IF NEVER EXPERIENCED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE: Which of the three following reasons do you consider most important in your decision not to have sexual intercourse:

- list of reasons given, such as "It is against my values".

The study will take place at a designated center (of which you will be informed), and will take no more than one hour of your son's time. We must emphasize that we are only concerned with group answers, and will keep every teenager's score completely anonymous. We will not release individual answers to any source, under any circumstances.

We would like to encourage you to let your son participate in this study. We think it will be a valuable experience for him, and would like to have as many teenagers as possible participate. You may be contacted at a later date to give your perception of the nature of the relationships within your family.

If you have any questions, please call Colleen MacDougall at 439-8816, or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 432-4191.

Thank you for your time.

Colleen MacDougall
Researcher
Department of Family Studies
University of Alberta

Dr. Nancy Hurlbut
Assistant Professor
Department of Family Studies
University of Alberta

---

_____ has my permission to participate in Colleen MacDougall's study on family relationships and teenage sexual behavior.
(adolescent's name)

_____ _____
Parent's Signature Date

Winter, 1985

Appendix 14

INFORMED CONSENT
ADOLESCENT

The purpose of this study is to determine the association between family relationships and teenage sexual behavior. Such information may be very helpful to me and other family educators in planning family life programs. Your task will be to complete a number of questionnaires on the above topics.

There will be no right or wrong answers to any of the questions; rather they will be relative to your individual situation(s). Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The whole study will take no more than one hour of your time. Following this, you will not be asked to participate further.

All information collected will be kept confidential. This means that only myself and my research advisor will see individual answers. Please do not put your name on any of the questionnaires. Answers will be reported as group summaries only. If you like, I will mail you a copy of these group results; however, I cannot give you a copy of individual results.

Place this INFORMED CONSENT and the next page asking for your permission to contact your parents in the small envelope provided. Return the questionnaires separately in the large envelope provided. If you have any questions, please ask Colleen MacDougall or call her at 439-8816, or call Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 432-4191.

I consent to take part in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Winter, 1985

Appendix 15

INFORMED CONSENT
PARENT

The purpose of this study is to determine the association between family relationships and teenage sexual behavior. Such information may be very helpful to me and other family educators in planning family life programs. Your task will be to complete a number of questionnaires on the above topics.

There will be no right or wrong answers to any of the questions; rather they will be relative to your individual situation(s). Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The whole study will take no more than one hour of your time. Following this, you will not be asked to participate further.

All information collected will be kept confidential. This means that only myself and my research advisor will see individual answers. Please do not put your name on any of the questionnaires. Answers will be reported as group summaries only. If you like, I will mail you a copy of these group results; however, I cannot give you a copy of individual results.

Place this INFORMED CONSENT in the small envelope provided. Return the questionnaires separately in the large envelope provided. If you have any questions, please ask Colleen MacDougall or call her at 439-8816, or call Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 432-4191.

I consent to take part in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Winter, 1985

Appendix 16

If possible, I would like to contact your parent(s) to ask them to fill out sections one, two and three of the questionnaire you will complete. These sections ask only about family relationships. They will not be asked to complete section four on sexual/contraceptive behavior. By completing these sections, parents will be able to give their perception(s) of relationships in your family, and this will add to my study. Be assured that they will not have access to any of your answers. If you do not wish to have your parents contacted, I will not do so. However, I would still appreciate your participation in the study.

I agree to let the researcher contact my parent(s) to ask them to fill out section one, two and three, but not section four.

_____ YES

_____ NO

IF YES, could you please provide their name(s), address(es), and phone numbers below so that I may mail the questionnaire to them. NOTE: If your mother's and

father's addresses and phone numbers are the same, you do not need to write them twice. However, if applicable, please give both their names so I may mail their questionnaire to them separately.

Parent(s) name: Mother: _____

Father: _____

Parent(s) address(es): Mother: _____

_____

Father: _____

_____

Parent(s) phone number(s): Mother: _____

Father: _____

Appendix 17

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please re-check to ensure that you have answered all questions. You will be sent a letter within two weeks which will provide you with more detailed information on the purpose of the study. Also, the letter will explain how the information obtained from this questionnaire will be used in planning family life programs.

Again, if you have any questions in the meantime, please call me, Colleen MacDougall, at 439-8816, or call Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 432-4191.

COLLEEN MacDOUGALL
Graduate Student
University of Alberta

Appendix 18

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The purpose of this study is to determine the association between family relationships and teenage sexual behavior. Such information may be very helpful to me and other family educators in planning family life programs. Your task will be to complete a number of questionnaires on the above topics.

There will be no right or wrong answers to any of the questions; rather they will be relative to your individual situation(s). Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The whole study will take no more than one hour of your time. Following this, you will not be asked to participate further.

All information collected will be kept confidential. This means that only myself and my research advisor will see individual answers. Please do not put your name on any of the questionnaires. Answers will be reported as group summaries only. If you like, I will mail you a copy of these group results; however, I cannot give you a copy of individual results.

If you have any questions, please ask Colleen MacDougall or call her at 439-8816, or call Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 432-4191.

Thank you for your time.

C. MacDougall
Researcher
Department of Family Studies
University of Alberta
Phone: 439-8816

N. L. Hurlbut, Ph.d.
Assistant Professor
Department of Family Studies
801 General Services Bldg.
University of Alberta
Phone: 432-4191

Winter, 1985

Appendix 19

Dear Parent(s):

I am conducting a study at the University of Alberta to determine the association between family relationships and teenage sexual behavior. Your daughter has participated in my study. At that time, she gave me permission to contact you, her parent(s), to ask if you would be willing to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. By participating in this study, you will indeed strengthen it by giving your perception of relationships in your family. If you do participate, I ask that you complete the questionnaire alone and without talking to anyone about it. Upon finishing it, you may discuss it as you wish.

Sincerely,

Appendix 20

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

This study focused on two specific topics - parent-teen communication style, and teenage sexual and contraceptive behavior. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between these two variables. Four communication styles were identified. They range from a high to a low degree of openness, and from a high to a low degree of disclosure. The study would indicate how these degrees of openness and disclosure, as defined in their respective communication styles, are related to the sexual and contraceptive behavior of teens. Such information will be useful in improving family life programs in that communication styles which have been shown to encourage responsible sexual/contraceptive behavior in teenagers may be stressed. By completing the given questionnaire, you have contributed to this research. You may, on request, have access to the results of this study. However, as indicated before, only group summaries will be made available; no individual answers will be given.

I have set up two meeting times when I will be available to answer any additional questions you may

have about the study. Those times are: July 16 at 12:30 p.m., and July 23 at 5:00 p.m. Both meetings will be held in Room 814, General Services Building, University of Alberta. If you cannot attend, or if you have questions in the meantime, please call me, Colleen MacDougall, at 439-8816, or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 432-4191.

COLLEEN MACDOUGALL
Graduate Student
University of Alberta